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NEW BOOKS REVIEWED.

MISS ELLEN GLASGOW is undoubtedly one of the most capable of our present-day story-tellers, and in her recent novel she has turned back to her happy hunting-grounds, the Virginia of the Reconstruction. Her last two novels, "The Wheel of Life" and "The Ancient Law," proved to those who cared that she was a serious and a philosophical novelist; but the large novel-reading public takes its novels as it would champagne at dinner or an opiate at night, and doubtless the present story* will serve better for light diversion. The picture of Richmond and Richmond society is photographic, and many of the characters are easy for those who know the environment well to identify. The struggle of the hero to raise himself from the obscurest of human fates to prominence in the social and financial worlds is the theme of the tale, and a charming little love idyl stretching from childhood through married life is enwoven in it. "The Descendant" and "The Voice of the People" both deal with the same general theme, but setting and characters show how wide a range of human knowledge Miss Glasgow has.

Sally Mickleborough is the regular Southern type of heroine, pretty, proud, high-spirited, unbroken and unbreakable by Fate. She loves and marries the plain man, and during his reverses she is his mainstay and strength; in his prosperity, however, his pre-occupation with business strains the relation between them, and the tale is of married love perfected through much pain. We predict an immediate popularity for Miss Glasgow's latest romance, though no one who knows aught of the real value of books could say that in any way it reached the heights of her "Ancient Law" and "Wheel of Life."

* "The Romance of a Plain Man." By Ellen Glasgow. The Macmillan Company, 1909.

Interest in "The Inner Shrine"* has been much stimulated by the announcement that it is the work of a well-known novelist whose name is not divulged. It has been attributed to Edith Wharton, Mrs. Humphry Ward and to Amélie Rives. That it is a woman's book no concealment can make us doubt, and but for the quality of a measured restraint, self-suppression and absence of the Virginia heroine we should be inclined to believe it to be the work of Amélie Rives. But if it is it means that this writer has gone industriously to school to Mrs. Wharton. The story has in it the excellencies of both writers, the care and the craftsmanlike structure of the one and the emotional fervor of the other. The heroine, half Irish and half French, has in her that strange blend of dreamy recklessness and gallant courage which might easily mark a high-bred Norman and Celt descent. Throughout the story she holds our sympathies by being really nobler than she is to outer seeming. The opening in the fast Parisian set and the transference to the old families in New York show a good knowledge of varying social ideals. It is a good story well told, and the analysis of the opposed racial ideals of honor is very acute.

Nothing in connection with recent American letters has been more delightful than to watch the steady growth and flowering of Miss Alice Brown's genius. Delicate, exquisite, but very shy at first, it has increased in scope and quality till it would be difficult to find another American story-writer to be called her equal. No one, remembering "The Day of His Youth," touched with poetic dream-perception, as it was, could have foreseen so fine a novel as "Rose McLeod." It was a delightful story, but it was so much more than a story; it was a wonderfully varied, moving bit of life caught and reproduced, with the poet's and the painter's glamour added. Florrie, the gay old lady of seventy-two, still busy with her love-affairs and her literary hoaxes and her sense of the sheer fun of living, was an achievement not easily paralleled. "The Story of Thyrza"† is a painting of lower life on a narrower canvas. Thyrza is the daughter of a poor village tailoress—a type of pure goodness, high thinking and plain living difficult to find

* "The Inner Shrine." By ?. Messrs. Harper & Brothers, 1909.

† "The Story of Thyrza." By Alice Brown. Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1909.